



DISTRICT OF

INNOVATION

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# INTRODUCTION

HB 1842 was passed during the 84th Texas legislative Session in spring 2015, and provides flexibilities to Texas public school districts designated as a District of Innovation. To access these flexibilities, a school district must adopt an innovation plan, as set forth in Texas Education Code Chapter 12A.

Districts of Innovation may be exempted from a number of state statutes and will have:

- Greater local control as the decision makers over the educational and instructional model for students;
- Increased freedom and flexibility, with accountability, relative to state mandates that govern educational programming; and
- Empowerment to innovate and think differently.

Districts are not exempt from statutes including curriculum and graduation requirements and academic and financial accountability.

# PROCESS

On October 17, 2016 the Lake Dallas Independent School District’s Board of Trustees initiated the process to become District of Innovation by adopting a resolution in accordance with Texas Education Code Chapter 12A.

On November 14, 2016, the Lake Dallas ISD Board of Trustees held a public hearing for public discussion on whether the District should develop a Local Innovation Plan for the designation of the District as a District of Innovation. With there being no objection from the hearing, the Board of Trustees appointed the Innovation Committee to discuss and draft a Local Innovation Plan. This committee represents various stakeholders across the district, including teachers, parents, campus administration, district administration and local business owners. On January 17, 2017, the District Education Improvement Committee approved the Local Innovation Plan by a majority vote. On January 23, 2017, the Board of Trustees approved the plan.

# TIMELINE

Date	Activity/Task
October 17, 2016	Board of Trustees passed Resolution to initiate District of Innovation Process
November 14, 2016	Board of Trustees held public hearing and appointed Innovation Committee
November 30, 2016	Initial meeting of Innovation Committee
December 15, 2016	Meeting to finalize District of Innovation Plan
December 16, 2016	Post District of innovation Plan on LDISD website
January 17, 2017	District Education Improvement Committee approval of District of Innovation Plan
January 23, 2017	Board of Trustees approval of District of Innovation Plan



# INNOVATION COMMITTEE

Name	Member Category
Bill Heidemann	Business Representative
Gary Peppers	Business Representative
Vicki Sargent	Business Representative
Kelly Hubbard	Business Representative
Bridgett Drozd	Business Representative
Frank Graham	Community Representative
Shawn Brewer	Parent Representative
Drew Pickard	Parent Representative
Ginger Collier	Parent Representative
Mark Tucker	Parent Representative
Tina Hicks	Parent Representative
Rick Bortnem	Parent Representative
Dana Dunn	Parent Representative
Marvlous Gowans	Parent Representative
Craig Chambers	Parent Representative
Terri Webb	Parent Representative
Marci Malcom	District Representative
Karla Landrum	District Representative
Melaynee Broadstreet	District Representative
Scott Head	District Representative
Mark Ruggles	District Representative
James Parker II	Campus Representative, LDMS
Jennifer Perry	Campus Representative, LDE
Denise Kennedy	Teacher Representative, LDHS
Amanda Young	Non-Teacher Representative, LDHS
Desi Beard	Non-Teacher Representative, LDMS
Olivia Stalnaker	Teacher Representative, LDMS
Denise Evans-Jackson	Teacher Representative, LDE
Katie Landaverde	Teacher Representative, LDE
Megan Cho	Teacher Representative, CE
Michelle Richey	Teacher Representative, CE
Ann Lenard	Teacher Representative, SSE
Jennifer Brumley	Teacher Representative, SSE



DISTRICT OF  
**INNOVATION**

# LDISD INNOVATION PLAN

Lake Dallas ISD is driven by four Board goals developed collaboratively by teachers, administrators, parents, community members, and business representatives. These goals inform the manner in which instruction is delivered and learning is experienced in LDISD.

1. Partner with and involve our diverse community to support LDISD students and staff.
2. Provide the consistent delivery of an innovative curriculum that: Individualizes instruction, motivates and meets the needs of all students, addresses varied learning styles, and strives toward the highest standard as measured by the Texas Education Agency.
3. Recruit and retain staff that advances the art and science of teaching.
4. Provide quality and safe facilities.

This five-year District of Innovation Plan, in effect from January 24, 2017 – January 23, 2022, provides the flexibility to incorporate innovative ideas to meet the Board goals. The plan allows for certain decisions to be made at the local level. In this way, LDISD can best serve its students and community.

## EXEMPTIONS

- I. First Day of Instruction
- II. Class Size and Notice of Class Size
- III. Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade
- IV. Probationary Contracts
- V. Designation of a Campus Behavior Coordinator
- VI. Certification Required, Education Preparation, Presentation and Recording of Certificates, and Parent Notification
- VII. Transfer of Student
- VIII. Teacher and Principal Appraisal System



# I. First Day of Instruction

*TEC §25.0811*

A school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

## ***Board Goals Inhibited by TEC §25.0811***

1. Partner with and involve our diverse community to support LDISD students and staff.

Flexibility with regard to school start date allows a start date that best meets the needs of the local community and its students. It also allows the district to more closely align its calendar with that of local partners such as community colleges, universities, technology training centers, and neighboring school districts. These partners provide a multitude of educational opportunities for the students of LDISD. For students in those programs, alignment allows a more consistent, meaningful experience. Additionally, flexibility with regard to school start date allows opportunities for students to obtain official transcripts, thereby enabling enrollment in summer courses offered by local partners.

2. Provide the consistent delivery of an innovative curriculum that: individualizes instruction, motivates and meets the needs of all students, addresses varied learning styles, and strives toward the highest standard as measured by the Texas Education Agency.

Flexibility with regard to school start date allows a more balanced instructional calendar. Increased balance results in increased consistency in the delivery of instruction. The pacing, breadth, and depth of course content can better meet the needs of students and maximize learning. Students will have more instruction prior to state-mandated assessments. Additionally, flexibility with regard to school start date allows more opportunities to create options for students in need of additional support. This increases the opportunity for individualized instruction that meets the needs of all students.

## ***Innovation Strategies***

The district shall determine annually the first day of instruction for its students. The district will consider the benefits of aligning its calendar with local partners as well as the effects a given start date will have on learning time, opportunities to provide additional supports to students, and the consistency of the delivery of instruction.



## II. Class Size & Notice of Class Size

### *TEC §25.112*

A school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class. On application of a school district, the commissioner may except the district from the limit in if the commissioner finds the limit works an undue hardship on the district. An exception expires at the end of the school year for which it is granted.

### *TEC §25.113*

A campus or district that is granted an exception under from class size limits shall provide written notice of the exception to the parent of or person standing in parental relation to each student affected by the exception.

### ***Board Goals Inhibited by TEC §25.112 & §25.113***

2. Provide the consistent delivery of an innovative curriculum that: individualizes instruction, motivates and meets the needs of all students, addresses varied learning styles, and strives toward the highest standard as measured by the Texas Education Agency.

Flexibility with regard to class size and notice of class size prevents situations where students or teachers must be moved to new classes after positive working relationships have been established. Preventing such moves increases consistency in the delivery instruction and the ability of teachers to learn students' needs and learning styles. Teachers are better able to individualize instruction when they have appropriate time to assess and understand students' needs and learning styles. Additionally, students can be served at their preferred or neighborhood campus rather than being transported to a different campus.

By addressing class size at the local level, the district can utilize a more efficient process for addressing class-size increases; therefore, administrators will have more time to focus on other tasks such as supporting the goals and vision of the district.

### ***Innovation Strategies***

The District will strive to keep the student-teacher ratio at 22:1 for classes in grades K – 4. When a class in grades K - 4 has a student-teacher ratio of 24:1, the Board of Trustees will be notified at its next regularly scheduled meeting. Exceptions for class sizes will not be sought from the Commissioner of Education; consequently, notices of exceptions will not be required.



### III. Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade

TEC §25.092

A student in any grade level from kindergarten through grade 12 may not be given credit or a final grade for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered.

#### ***Board Goals Inhibited by TEC §25.092***

2. Provide the consistent delivery of an innovative curriculum that: individualizes instruction, motivates and meets the needs of all students, addresses varied learning styles, and strives toward the highest standard as measured by the Texas Education Agency.

Flexibility with regard to minimum attendance for class credit or final grade allows the district innovative options for assessing student mastery and individualizing instruction. Students with legitimate scheduling conflicts, who could otherwise demonstrate mastery, would not have to be penalized or experience delays in advancement. Examples of legitimate scheduling conflicts include extra- and co-curricular activities, academic activities, and other extenuating circumstances. Such scheduling conflicts can currently discourage participation in activities that promote social and emotional engagement and development. Additionally, students with extenuating circumstances who are penalized by minimum attendance requirements might be more likely to drop out.

Flexibility with regard to minimum attendance for class credit or final grade also allows innovation in the method, location, and times instruction may be delivered to students. Options such as blended learning increase the ability of the district to motivate and meet the needs of all students, address varied learning styles, and strive toward high standards.

#### ***Innovation Strategies***

The district will determine appropriate methods for assessing or otherwise determining whether the content of a course has been mastered. These methods will be used when, for legitimate reasons, a student is not in attendance for 90 percent of the days a class is offered. Legitimate reasons include scheduling conflicts due to extra- and co-curricular activities, academic activities, and other extenuating circumstances as deemed appropriate at the local level. Additionally, the district will explore innovations in the methods, locations, and times instruction may be delivered to students.

Note: Relief in the area of minimum attendance for class credit or final grade does not impact or alter existing compulsory attendance requirements or University Interscholastic League (UIL) rules. It does not limit a teacher's right to determine the finality of a grade in accordance with Texas Education Code Sec. 28.214 nor does it restrict or alter a teacher's right to assign grades in accordance with Texas Education Code Sec. 28.216.



## IV. Probationary Contracts

### *TEC §21.102*

A person who is employed as a teacher by a school district for the first time shall be employed under a probationary contract. A probationary contract may not be for a term exceeding one school year. The probationary contract may be renewed for two additional one-year periods, for a maximum permissible probationary contract period of three school years, except that the probationary period may not exceed one year for a person who has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment by the district.

Note: A "teacher" means a principal, supervisor, classroom teacher, school counselor, or other full-time professional employee who is required to hold a certificate issued under TEC §21, Subchapter B.

### ***Board Goals Inhibited by TEC §21.102***

3. Recruit and retain staff that advances the art and science of teaching.

Flexibility with regard to probationary contracts allows the district sufficient time, when needed, to determine a teacher's effectiveness. Adequately determining a teacher's effectiveness makes it more likely that only those teachers who advance the art and science of teaching will be retained.

### ***Innovation Strategies***

The district may offer a probationary contract for a period of one additional year for a newly hired teacher who has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment to allow for continued professional growth. The term "teacher" means a principal, supervisor, classroom teacher, school counselor, or other full-time professional employee who is required to hold a certificate issued under TEC §21, Subchapter B or a school nurse.

Note: Relief only affects employees hired who have been employed as a teacher in public education for five of the eight preceding years.



## V. Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator

*TEC §37.0012*

A person at each campus must be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator. The person designated may be the principal of the campus or any other campus administrator selected by the principal. The campus behavior coordinator is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline.

### ***Board Goals Inhibited by TEC §37.0012***

1. Partner with and involve our diverse community to support LDISD students and staff.

Flexibility with regard to the designation of campus behavior coordinators allows for greater collaboration when addressing the social and emotional learning of students. Time and resources can be spent on fostering positive school culture and implementing multi-systemic prevention and intervention programs.

### ***Innovation Strategies***

The district will decide which employees and systems to involve in maintaining student discipline instead of a single person designated as a campus behavior coordinator. Disciplinary responsibilities will be included in an employee's job description when applicable. The maintenance of student discipline will be appropriately addressed in the Student Code of Conduct.



## VI. Certification Required, Educator Preparation, Presentation & Recording of Certificates, & Parental Notification

### *TEC §21.003(a)*

A person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or teacher trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit.

### *TEC §21.044*

The board shall propose rules establishing the training requirements a person must accomplish to obtain a certificate, enter an internship, or enter an induction-year program. The board shall specify the minimum academic qualifications required for a certificate.

### *TEC §21.053*

A person who desires to teach in a public school shall present the person's certificate for filing with the employing district before the person's contract with the board of trustees of the district is binding. An educator who does not hold a valid certificate may not be paid for teaching or work done before the effective date of issuance of a valid certificate.

### *TEC §21.057*

A school district that assigns an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days during the same school year shall provide written notice of the assignment to a parent or guardian of each student in that classroom. The superintendent of the school district shall provide the notice not later than the 30th instructional day after the date of the assignment of the inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher. The school district shall: make a good-faith effort to ensure that the notice required by this section is provided in a bilingual form to any parent or guardian whose primary language is not English; retain a copy of any notice provided under this section; make information relating to teacher certification available to the public on request.

“Inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher” includes an individual serving on an emergency certificate issued under Section 21.041(b)(2) or an individual who does not hold any certificate or permit issued under this chapter and is not employed as specified by Subdivision (2)(E).

“Inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher” does not include an individual who is: a certified teacher assigned to teach a class or classes outside his or her area of certification, as determined by rules proposed by the board in specifying the certificate required for each assignment; serving on a certificate issued due to a hearing impairment under Section 21.048; serving on a certificate issued pursuant to enrollment in an approved alternative certification program under Section 21.049; certified by another state or country and serving on a certificate issued under Section 21.052; serving on a school district teaching permit issued under Section 21.055; or employed under a waiver granted by the commissioner pursuant to Section 7.056.

This section does not apply if a school is required in accordance with Section 1111(h) (6)(B)(ii), No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (20 U.S.C. Section 6311), and its subsequent amendments, to provide notice to a parent or guardian regarding a teacher who is not highly qualified, provided the school provides notice as required by that Act.



***Board Goals Inhibited by TEC §21.003(a), §21.044, §21.053, §21.057***

2. Provide the consistent delivery of an innovative curriculum that: individualizes instruction, motivates and meets the needs of all students, addresses varied learning styles, and strives toward the highest standard as measured by the Texas Education Agency.

Flexibility in the noted requirements allows the district to make specific employment decisions exclusively at the local level. Making local decisions about recruiting and employing effective and experienced individuals who do not hold a teaching certificate increases the degree to which the district can offer an innovative curriculum and instruction.

3. Recruit and retain staff that advances the art and science of teaching.

As noted above, making local decisions about recruiting and employing effective and experienced individuals who do not hold a teaching certificate increases the degree to which the district can offer an innovative curriculum and instruction.

***Innovation Strategies***

The district reserves the right to recruit individuals and determine the candidates best suited to teach its courses, such as CTE (Career and Technical Education), Foreign Language, Dual Credit, and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) courses, etc., based upon qualifications such as education, industry knowledge and certification, and real-world experience. District leadership will determine whether it is in the best interest of its students to locally certify individuals based on these factors rather than appeal to the Commissioner of Education.



## VII. Transfer of Student

### *TEC §25.036*

Any child, other than a high school graduate, who is younger than 21 years of age and eligible for enrollment on September 1 of any school year may transfer annually from the child's school district of residence to another district in this state if both the receiving district and the applicant parent or guardian or person having lawful control of the child jointly approve and timely agree in writing to the transfer.

Note: The rule has been interpreted to require a transfer to be for a period of one school year.

### ***Board Goals Inhibited by TEC §25.036***

2. Provide the consistent delivery of an innovative curriculum that: individualizes instruction, motivates and meets the needs of all students, addresses varied learning styles, and strives toward the highest standard as measured by the Texas Education Agency.

Flexibility with regard to transfer of students allows the district to create an educational environment that is more conducive to learning. Flexibility allows revocation of a transfer agreement when the student exhibits conduct that disrupts the educational environment or warrants disciplinary action such as suspension, placement in a disciplinary alternative education program, or expulsion. It allows revocation of a transfer agreement when the student exhibits attendance problems that impact the performance of the student or school district. Additionally, it allows an efficient way to remove barriers to the high-quality learning environment that other students deserve.

4. Provide quality and safe facilities.

Flexibility with regard to transfer of students allows the district to create a safer educational environment for the reasons noted above.

### ***Innovation Strategies***

The district will reserve the right to revoke the transfer of a student at any time during the year based on behavior, excessive tardies, late pick-up, attendance, or not remaining in good academic standing. Revocation of transfers for the above reasons is final and may not be appealed.



## VIII. Teacher & Principal Appraisal System

### *TEC §21.352*

In appraising teachers, each school district shall use the appraisal process and performance criteria developed by the commissioner or an appraisal process and performance criteria developed by the district- and campus-level committees established under Section 11.251, containing the items described by Sections 21.351(a)(1) and (2), and adopted by the board of trustees. The board of trustees may reject an appraisal process and performance criteria developed by the district- and campus-level committees but may not modify the process or criteria. Except as otherwise provided by this subsection, appraisal must be done at least once during each school year. A teacher may be appraised less frequently if the teacher agrees in writing and the teacher's most recent evaluation rated the teacher as at least proficient, or the equivalent, and did not identify any area of deficiency. A teacher who is appraised less frequently than annually must be appraised at least once during each period of five school years. The district shall maintain a written copy of the evaluation of each teacher's performance in the teacher's personnel file. Each teacher is entitled to receive a written copy of the evaluation promptly on its completion. After receiving a written copy of the evaluation, a teacher is entitled to a second appraisal by a different appraiser or to submit a written rebuttal to the evaluation to be attached to the evaluation in the teacher's personnel file. The evaluation and any rebuttal may be given to another school district at which the teacher has applied for employment at the request of that district.

In addition to conducting a complete appraisal as frequently as required by Subsection (c), a school district shall require that appropriate components of the appraisal process, such as classroom observations and walk-throughs, occur more frequently as necessary to ensure that a teacher receives adequate evaluation and guidance. A school district shall give priority to conducting appropriate components more frequently for inexperienced teachers or experienced teachers with identified areas of deficiency.

A teacher may be given advance notice of the date or time of an appraisal, but advance notice is not required. A district shall use a teacher's consecutive appraisals from more than one year, if available, in making the district's employment decisions and developing career recommendations for the teacher.

The district shall notify a teacher of the results of any appraisal of the teacher in a timely manner so that the appraisal may be used as a developmental tool by the district and the teacher to improve the overall performance of the teacher.

### *TEC §21.3541*

In appraising principals, each school district shall use either the appraisal system and school leadership standards and indicators developed or established by the commissioner under this section, or an appraisal process and performance criteria developed by the district in consultation with the district-level and campus-level committees established under Section 11.251 and adopted by the board of trustees.

Each school district shall appraise each principal annually.

### ***Board Goals Inhibited by TEC §21.352, §21.3541***

3. Recruit and retain staff that advances the art and science of teaching.

Flexibility with regard to the appraisal system allows the district to alter the existing system in a way that is more supportive of teachers and principals.

The new state appraisal systems, the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) and Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS), are designed as a



teacher and principal growth model. LDISD is now in its second year using T-TESS and are using T-PESS for the first time this year. We very much like the growth model and feel it is very beneficial to the continued growth of our campus instructional and administrative staff. Within the appraisal system, however, a new student performance component is being implemented in the 17-18 school year which changes the focus and intent of the appraisal process for specific subject and grade level teachers by using a single test in a single day to determine the performance of teachers. LDISD has measures in place to monitor student growth in all subjects and grade levels and use that data to implement instructional strategies to address needs and increase student performance. Therefore, we believe that student performance is better measured and student needs better addressed outside of the T-TESS system. Additionally, neither the T-TESS nor T- PESS offer any variation in the rubric for alternate classroom settings, support teacher roles, or differing principal and assistant principal responsibilities making it difficult to evaluate everyone in the same system.

### ***Innovation Strategies***

LDISD will to continue to use T-TESS and T-PESS appraisal systems to evaluate and grow our teachers and principals, but will address student performance and growth through other measures that are more timely and better meet the needs of our students. Additionally, so that all campus instructional and administrative staff can benefit from the T-TESS and T PESS growth models, the district will modify the T-TESS and T-PESS rubrics to better fit the roles and responsibilities of teachers and administrators whose jobs do not align with the rubrics provided in T-TESS and T-PESS. These adjustments to T-TESS and T-PESS LDISD will provide all staff with a reflective and growth oriented evaluation leading to professional growth and improved instructional practices.

